

22
Christian Confidence built upon
the Promise of God.

1896
A

S E R M O N

OCCASIONED BY

The Death

O F

Mrs. MARTHA LANFEAR,

Who died January 2.

Preached at Painswick, Gloucestershire,

Jan. 8, 1792.

By CORNELIUS WINTER.

*They that say such Things declare plainly that they seek
a better Country. Heb. xi. 14.* R

BATH:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY S. HAZARD:

SOLD ALSO BY

MATTHEWS, STRAND; DILLY, POULTRY; VERNOR,

KIRCHIN-LANE; LONDON:

MILLS AND BULGIN, BRISTOL; COLLINS, SALISBURY.

MDCXCII.



DEDICATION.



To the Family of Mrs. Lanfear,

THE following, plain but scriptural Sermon, would not have passed through the press, had I not been desirous that it should reach the hand of every Relative, allied either by blood, or affinity to the excellent Woman to whose life in brief terms it adverts, and to whose memory I would wish to pay a tribute of the sincerest affection. You have been a Family of note, and have to boast of your Ancestors who were yeomen of great respect for the equity of their dealings, and generosity with which they acted towards all who served under them, and the poor of the neighbourhood wherein they lived, and from whom they obtained a good report.

DEDICATION.

I am inclined to think from information they acted from proper principle—that they disclaimed the idea of making that a merit for their acceptance with God which is but in itself a moral duty, and that while they were remarkable for their humanity they owned themselves sinners and expected salvation only by grace. Such are the tenets which should be inculcated upon and imbibed by all men. Such have been the subject of my ministry, and I am so far from repenting that I ever embraced them, and from being ashamed that I have propagated them, as an itinerant and a stated minister, that I shall be glad to subscribe to them with my dying hand, and testify to them with my expiring breath. I am sorry they are so superficially touched, and so incoherently scattered in the following discourse, but the subject of it would not allow of a large discussion of them. It may be, enough is discovered to give disgust to some into whose hands it will certainly be conveyed. But suffer me
to

to remind you, dear Relatives, if I may be permitted to address you as such, that if you build your eternal hopes upon *any other foundation than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ*, you will find yourselves dreadfully mistaken in *the day when every man's work shall be made manifest, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is*. We live in a day wherein doctrines soothing to the pride of human nature, and contradictory to those expressly revealed in the Scripture are every where promulgated; and so general an inattention is discovered to the importance of truth, that men slide into the grossest errors, from Arminianism the too general doctrine in our established pulpits to Arianism and Socinianism, now most strenuously broached among many of our polite Dissenters before they are aware. Neither of these doctrines are friendly to eternal happiness; they exclude the importance of renovation, they derogate from the glory of our Redeemer, they cut off the

DEDICATION.

communication between him and poor sinners so that he can profit them nothing. It is evident from the propensity there is in man to yield implicit assent to whatever is enforced under the specious appearance of learning, and philosophy without examination, and to oppose what has a tendency to unbottom his false confidence, that his case is bad. The knowledge of the disease is the first advance towards a recovery, but there is little prospect of that knowledge being acquired while our minds are uninfluenced by the Holy Spirit of God. It is a consequent of the reception of the erroneous doctrines above adverted to, that the operations of the Holy Spirit are treated with neglect, if not with contempt. If he do not convince you of sin you will never feel its malignant evil, if he do, you will never think lightly of the gospel prescription. You will then know that the remedy for the disease cannot be produced from the seat where the disorder is lodged; by which I mean to signify that
it

DEDICATION.

it is impossible a meritorious effort should be exerted by man who is wholly destitute of merit, and has nothing in him but what is obnoxious to God. My inclination leads me to introduce Scripture in confirmation of what I advance, but if I were to select from the Bible all that is apposite to the point, I must swell this address to a size equal with the Sermon that follows. I beseech you then that you make it your own exercise to search the Scriptures, though it should be with a wish to confute what I have said, I am sure it would confirm you in the truth of the things asserted.

Take as kind as I mean kindly to present you with, the following Sermon, and believe me when I say it is not to reproach you or to represent our dear Relative so lately deceased in an advantageous state, superior to what I suppose you can ever attain to. I mean only to awaken your attention to, and excite your desires after the the same views and prospects which appeared

peared so strong to her. *The same Lord is rich in mercy unto all that call upon him, and if you seek him while he may be found and call upon him while he is near, he will be merciful to your unrighteousnesses; he will guide you by his counsel, and he will give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Jesus Christ.*

Providentially introduced into your Family by the matrimonial union I have formed, and by which my life for more than twelve years has been rendered so exceedingly happy, it is reasonable to suppose I have some concern for your welfare. I have; I feel myself interested in your happiness, and proportionably feel with and for you under your family bereavements. A material change has already taken place, and several of you now stand upon the verge of eternity. A rising generation is coming forward who may be blessed by your example if you give religion all the countenance she claims and
are

D E D I C A T I O N.

are yourselves partakers of her joy. Interested in what she has to impart and instrumental to communicate to those who may survive, you will all at last meet in the upper world, and with the saints of the Most High *rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

The Providence gives me an opportunity which I cannot pass, to applaud your conduct who convey the Name of a deceased Parent to futurity in the example you have set of filial affection. I have taken the liberty to mention it in the Sermon; it reproaches while it instructs, but it is the best mode of reproach. May every dissolute son whose conduct has been the reverse of yours feel it, while you enjoy a present and future satisfaction from your example being imitated in the children God has graciously given you. Intwined in each other's affection may you long live to bless and to be blessed, and in conjunction with all your Relations eventually

DEDICATION.

tually share in the *inheritance incorruptible,
undefiled, and that fadeth not away,*

So prays

Your's affectionately,

CORNELIUS WINTER.

PAINSWICK,

Jan. 30, 1793.



A

S E R M O N, &c.

PSALM LXXIII. 24.

*Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and after-
ward receive me to glory.*

IT is well observed by the Wise Man that *As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.* Local circumstances, distance of time in which one lives from another, and the different dispensations under which they live make no material difference, all have the same earthly attractions while strangers to God and are as easily drawn by them; they have similar desires after they are brought to the knowledge of the truth, and pursue the objects of them with equal sincerity. The man who is swallowed up in the concerns of this life has not time to examine his own features, or in other words, to gain a knowledge of his own heart. He diverts his thoughts from himself, and taking it for granted that

that all is well, risks the decision to the great day of account, supposing that will determine all investigations in his favour.

But the man of thought and observation on whom a ray of divine light has fallen, and who is enlightened by it, thinks over his case with deep attention, and scrupulously examines himself: according to the correspondence he perceives between himself and those whose character stands upon sacred record he judges it prudent to adopt their language in the account he has to give of himself; nor is he less concerned to adopt this method for the expression of his faith and confidence in the God of his mercies when his experience warrants him, than to delineate his depravity in the self-humbling and self-abhorning language which they used before him. Men of the first genius who had ideas and language at command have been partial to this custom as well as the poor and illiterate who could not with propriety express themselves but as they borrowed the phraseology of holy men of old.

If sincerity and truth actuates to the use of this custom which has so long prevailed, it is truly commendable.

In the choice of the words before us for the subject of our present thought, I have respect to an amiable Character who has just left our world. In the early part of life her conduct was expressive of her submission to, her dependence upon, and her

her confidence in God. She could then say, *Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel*; and when the life made up of goodness and mercy drew to a close, the feelings of her faith led her to conclude upon solid ground, *Thou shalt receive me to glory*.

The doctrine contained in the text may be given under the following heads:

I. What man is without the attention and care of God.

II. The idea a mind rightly informed has concerning God.

III. The confidence excited in God by the idea raised concerning him in a mind thus informed.

I. We are to consider what man is without the attention and care of God. Not to detract from his real worth if he has any, we may describe him as a poor unstable creature, liable to imposition and seduction, and exposed to mental and practical error.

1st. The mind is liable to delusion; and it appears from hence. Great numbers who are introduced into the profession of religion scarcely are at liberty to dispose of themselves, before they disengage themselves from the professional bonds by which they were holden, and of those who maintain their profession of regard to religion how few lay a proper foundation upon which a permanent superstructure can be raised? In this matter of all others the most important we are sure to err but as

we

we proceed under the inspiration of the Almighty which giveth understanding.* The utter incapacity there is in man to act aright independent of the divine help is exemplified in the strongest terms by inspired Penmen. They are not backward to use the plainest metaphors when they give a description of him both in his first setting forth in life, and in his conduct after he arrives to maturity. Zophar the Naamathite in his conference with Job had every son of Adam's case in view when he said, *Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild asses colt.*† Thus born he is brutish and untractable, and at the greatest degree of distance from that information which is necessary to be received for the cultivation of the mind. He is compared thus to the lowest of the brutes not merely in his uncultivated, but also in his cultivated state, if we may conclude that the care and attention of God to the Jewish church gave them the full advantage of religion: for though *nourished and brought up by him*, they forsook him, and into such a degree of degeneracy did they sink that they are severely reflected upon by him for it. — The heavy reflection and the allegation connected with it are couched in such terms as these—*They are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity and are become vain; neither said they, Where is the Lord that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness.*‡ Even their priests

* Job xxxii. 8. † Job ii. 12. ‡ Jer. xxv. 6.

priests are culpable of this remissness when the state of the times was an indication that the Lord had departed from them in judgment, and they who handled the law are charged with ignorance of the Law-giver; *they are altogether become brutish and foolish**—so brutish as to be compared to *a wild ass in the wilderness, who snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure*.† Agur the son of Jakeh, took up this idea, saying, *Surely I am more brutish than any man*;‡ intimating that though he discovered greater degrees of depravity in himself than others, yet in all he discovered so much as to conceive he did injustice to no one by calling him brutish.

This doctrine strongly exemplified and confirmed as it is by the wicked and vicious practice of man, meets with its opponents. The asserters of the dignity of human nature think we endeavour to prove too much, and that it is in the power of reason and education to roll away the reproach. We would acknowledge the happy effect of education, and be thankful for the efforts used to spread it more universally than it was diffused in former ages. We cordially fall in with the idea of the heathen Sage in his description of the difference between a man improved by education and the illiterate, namely, *the same that there is between tamed and untamed horses*; but after all, if he be destitute of the guidance of the Spirit of God he is

B 2

under

* Jer. x. 8. † Jer. ii. 24. ‡ Prov. xxx. 2.

under that disadvantage the most extensive education can never remove. It is not in the power of mortals to do God's work. We will appeal to matters of fact. Of the many thousands who are indebted to our publick schools for education, how very few are capable of forming a sentiment on those points the Scriptures hold out as more immediately important? How very few are humbled under a sense of sin, and turn their eyes, their hands, their feet to the Saviour of sinners? How few renounce their own righteousness, or lament their own wickedness? How many are ripe to perpetrate wicked acts, and only want opportunity to discover the brutality of their nature with impunity? Since amidst so many powerful exertions as have been made and are still making to moralize mankind there are so many instances of immorality prevailing in our land, let us not stifle our convictions and delude ourselves; rather let us acknowledge that the way of man wherein he ought to walk is not in himself, *it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.** Whatever the Prophet by this expression might primarily intend, with the strictest propriety it may apply to the point in question. Like children, too confident of their ability but utterly incapable of performing what they rashly attempt; self-confident but inefficient, man sallies forth upon the arduous task
of

* Jer. x. 23.

of making his way to that city which is not to be found by any but those who have the Lord himself for their counsel and convoy. As man resembles children in one part of his conduct so he does in another; therefore he is easily turned out of his right way as he is with difficulty brought into it. A lying prophet may divert him from that which is right, and influence him to that which is wrong. It is too commonly the case that truth is opposed and error embraced, because the one is difficult to be accounted for by carnal reason, and the other soothing to the corrupt disposition of our depraved nature. Men of the first characters and distinction may be produced as examples by which to justify the observation. Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews, who had that secret and singular conversation with our blessed Lord, recorded in the third chapter of St. John's Gospel, is a glaring instance. It is true his ignorance was unaccompanied by that virulence which many equally ignorant have discovered when the important point of regeneration has been discussed for the benefit of mankind. The modest inquiry, *How can these things be?* while our blessed Lord was enlarging on the subject, was a favourable omen that the time was near at hand when he was to *know the doctrine whether it were of God*. That Spirit which is as the wind for the freeness of its agency blowing where it listeth, must lead into the way of truth, else the mind will remain in a bewildered state, and so far

from being informed of, and affected with its condition, it will be determined in its judgment by *men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth.* Such are always at hand watching opportunities to *draw away disciples after them.* The Spirit of God being absent there will be a concurrence between the deceiver and the deceived, as was the case complained of in the days of Jeremiah, *The prophets prophesy falsely, and my people love to have it so.** But the text presents a very different character to us, it is the character of one rightly informed: we are therefore from the language he uses in the

II. Place to consider the idea he has formed concerning God. It may be expressed thus: that God is disposed to make man's state the matter of his concern and attention. Though it is a very limited idea yet it is just so far as it extends itself, and it is not consistent with our design to go beyond the bounds circumscribed by the present opportunity. The representation of his divine property plainly evinces the position. There is in him compassion towards the miserable, that induces him unsolicited, and much more when solicited, to take notice of the sinner in his lost estate. If at any time we meet with an exception to the general case of man in a person whose understanding is enlightened, whence are we to account for it but from hence, that *God who caused light to shine out of darkness hath shined in his heart?†* The

† 1 Cor. iv. 6.

internal darkness prevents man from using external means to advantage. It is by external means accompanied with internal light, that God conducts souls *to his holy habitation*, and while he gives proof of his concern for their eternal salvation he takes care of their mortal part and displays the wisdom of his providence while *he shews the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.*†

The means God ordinarily works by are the Word and Ordinances; these are productive of information to the understanding. The written word, or sacred Scripture is most essential to this end. God magnifies this his Word in the estimation of men, and disposes them to use it as the grand medium of information. *The entrance of the word, saith the Psalmist, giveth light. It giveth understanding to the simple.** In the sanctuary of God, and there is no doubt by *the testimony of the Lord which is sure, enlighteneth the eyes,†* the Psalmist got his mistaken notions, drawn from the prosperity of the wicked rectified, and acquired just apprehensions concerning the advantages of the godly. Thus prepared for, and successful in his discovery, he forms his sentiment of God favourable to his own satisfaction and comfort, and furnishing with information encouraging to others. He had an holy oracle to consult, very different from the ora-

B 4

cle

‡ Eph. ii. 7. * Ps. cxix. 130. † Ps. xix. 9.

cle the Heathen consulted upon all emergencies, he lifted up his hands towards it, *the voice of his supplication* attended the lifting up of his hands, and the answer was so full and satisfactory that it regulated, and rectified his conclusion respecting the divine conduct; his faith received strength and he became more abundantly persuaded than ever, that whatever intricacies and labyrinths future life might consist of, he should have a guide through them, and that crooked paths should be made straight to him. His faith expressed in the revelation received under divine sanction amounts to a promise, and is so exactly correspondent with the many promises of God's gracious attention to his people scattered in every part of the sacred Scriptures, that it is most suitably adapted to the use of the believer when he would express his sentiment of the divine faithfulness, which by Providence unfolds the promises as they respect the events of this life.

*Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come,** and the believer considers God as concerned for both states. The attention of divine Providence, though more especially towards the believer, is not confined to him exclusive of other men. All are interested in the divine Providence. The believer himself was closely attended by it previous to his passing under that blessed change which entitled him to his new birth

birth character. There never was a rational creature but what had his existence by the predetermination of God, and, under his providential government and direction, till he was discharged from it: though, alas, like *Ephraim*, he knew not who taught him to go taking him by his arms, as the attentive tender parent supports the child in the infancy of its days.

The people of God are capable of the highest entertainment on the review of life; they have been led by a way which they knew not; they are no less surprized than entertained when they remember all the way which the Lord their God led them. Had they a previous acquaintance with the difficulties before them, they had fainted with despair, and would have thought it impossible that they could ever have surmounted them. Why they have, is to be accounted for in the Psalmist's words as they respected himself: *I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by thy right hand.** Is it matter of wonder that such should give the future disposal of themselves to him who hath been the guide of their youth?—Awakened to a concern about their immortal part, while they give themselves up to the disposal of God's gracious providence, to be what and where he would have them; they commit the keeping of their souls unto him in well doing, reverently and confidently saying, *Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*

B 5

Here

* Ps. lxxiii. 23.

Here then we may enter upon the

III. Head of our doctrine, which is to treat of the confidence excited in God by the idea raised concerning him in a mind well informed. It is a confidence that includes resignation and expectation.—1st. It implies resignation to the will of God. We are by nature prone to the presumptuous act of resisting his will, and many an hard struggle is made to gain our own. Scenes painted in our imagination set us upon the pursuit of a reality corresponding, and till we are under the same disposition with our Psalmist, *we walk in a vain shew, and are disquieted in vain.* No sooner are we convinced of our folly, and our spirit tamed and subjugated to the yoke of Christ, than our language to the divine Majesty whom we previously dared to insult, is, *O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.** Or if the individual penitent should be heard to utter his language it is to this effect: *I have deservedly born chastisement, I will not intentionally offend any more; that which I see not teach thou me; if I have done iniquity I will do no more.†* There may be intervening moments when the gracious soul may find *the flesh lusting against the spirit*, but as the effect of his resignation to God, *with his mind he serves the law of God*, he will not indulge a wish for any thing that may

be

† Isa. xxvi. 13. † Job xxxiv. 31, 32.

be an impediment in his way to prevent his glorifying God, nor intentionally take a step but at the command, and with the approbation of HIM whose he is, and whom he desires with his spirit to serve. Honoured by his notice, and happy in his protection *under whose wings he comes to trust,** he no more withdraws himself nor is he backward to submit to any dispensation however apparently severe. He conceives that all things are well ordered, it cannot be otherwise with him *whose counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.†* To act in subordination to the appointment of God he esteems his duty, but on no consideration will he take a step without him, nor will he be dissatisfied with any step he may require him to take. As children follow, or go with their parent, when necessity or duty requires a removal from one station to another, though it should be an exchange of kingdoms without repining at their lot: or, as *Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, obeyed, not knowing whether he went.‡*—So with resignation to the well ordered appointments of Providence do believers shift their stations in life and submit to all vicissitude, and under the guidance of the Providence, Word, and Spirit of God, advance towards the life that is to come. 2d. There is expectation included in this expression of the believers confidence.

* Ruth ii. 12. † Isa. xxy. 1. ‡ Heb. xi. 8.

denue. It enables him to conclude with certainty that he shall be preserved from ruinous steps, that he shall not be left to himself; by it he encourages himself in the Lord his God, and is emboldened to pray. It conciliates the mind to the distresses and trials of life, and keeps it from perturbation in seasons of darkness when it could not positively determine that it should evermore see light but from this authorized expectation. I call it an authorized expectation—it is divinely authorized by that promise, *I will guide thee continually.*

*If the counsel of the Lord standeth forever** there can be nothing short of safety to him who is guided by it. However the devices of man's heart, many as they may be, may all subside without effect, as the waves composing into a smooth surface, *the counsel of the Lord that shall stand:†—it standeth forever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations.‡* He only puts his counsel, previously designed, into practice when he restores to paths of righteousness and when he influences his people restored by this Holy Spirit to regulate their conduct according to his Word. If we have an evangelical faith apprehending Jesus, and a disposition ever attendant on an evangelical faith, to *exercise ourselves unto godliness*, it is an evidence that God is with us, and under all circumstances which respect our situation in this world we shall have proof that he will

* Pl. xxxiii. 11. † Prov. xii. 21. ‡ Pl. xxxiii. 11.

will not forsake us. Future faith shall be strengthened by a recollection of past deliverances and the impartation of strength necessary for the present day.

The counsel in which the Psalmist reposes confidence, and which confidence is expressive of the expectation of glory beyond the grave, has much more resignation in it than we have given in what we have advanced. A pious Critick has sworn the idea by referring to the shepherd in restoring and leading the strayed sheep, the father's attention in bringing up his son, and the mother's tenderness in leading her child.*

It all amounts to this, That God has a gracious regard for the body and soul; that the one shall experience his providential care, and the other the aids of his grace while the believer has his existence in this mortal state, and the completion of the whole care of God will be the reception of him to glory. It further includes in it security in death, deliverance from it, and a further existence. The fear of death is no uncommon fear; it has been the worm at the root of many a good man's comfort, and the disagreeable companion of a long life. Death is a gloomy state, but to the believer it is only a dark entrance into *marvellous light*. Possessed with this persuasion, saith the Psalmist, *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear*

no

* Vide Leigh's *Critica Sacra* on .JRU

an evil. The unseen hand will maintain its hold, and the voice which will then speak will be known as the voice of the Almighty, saying, *Fear not, I am with thee*: it will excite a sweet repose. Nor shall the promise, *I will strengthen thee*, fail till brought to the extent of the way, and the last act of faith exercised is honoured by an admission into glory.

The body is subject to mortality; under the sensibility of its decay and in the dissolution of its component parts is the crisis when fear may prevail or supports be received. After that the darkness will be past, and the true light will shine upon the Soul. But the actings of faith cannot be fully honoured nor the promise upon which it is exercised for admission into glory be effectually accomplished until the resurrection. As at one time the believer on a partial view of the subject, may take comfort from the immediate state of the soul on its separation from the body, at another he may extend his views to the morning of the resurrection, as the Psalmist does when he says, *God shall redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me*.† Comforts flowing from the favour of God are suited to, and satisfying in every state. As grace in this life animates and makes happy in proportion to the measure of the divine consolation with which it is attended, so in that state of separate
spirits.

* Ps. ii. 8. † Ps. xlix. 16.

[27]
spirits there is doubtless a satisfaction though not a completion of happiness. The full and final completion of the believer's happiness is reserved for that solemn time when all who have waited for the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory, shall hear him say, *Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* Then indeed they will receive *the end of their faith* by obtaining *the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

When we attempt to speak of glory we are non-plused. What mortal eye has seen the state that comes under the description of glory! The specimen of it that has been conveyed to our world has been too dazzling and confounding to admit of the mind making a full acquaintance with it. The tincture of it only upon the face of Moses when he came from the mount where God communed with him, possessed the children of Israel with such fear that they could not come nigh him—they could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance.* Yet incapable as we are of beholding or of adequately conceiving of glory now, we shall be received into it by and by if that faith is ours which led the Psalmist to speak so peremptorily to God in the text. Though we cannot conceive of it as it is, or speak of it as we would, we may refer to it under inferior descriptions such as
our

our sense is familiar with, and such as the sacred Scripture in condescension to our weakness describes it by. In a lower notion of it, it is a deliverance from tears, from crying, from sorrow, from pain, from death.* It is a transition from all things common to this state. Whatever is here essential to honour will be unnecessary there. The very endowments of heaven itself and without which in this world it is impossible to live, will there lose all their importance such as *the sun to give light by day and the moon by night*. There will be no need of either, *for the glory of God enlightens that celestial world, and the Lamb is the light thereof*. If as influenced by faith, here any of our fellow pilgrims can *rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*, how great must our joy be there, while emanations from the glory of God will descend upon us! Rest from labour, the honours of a victorious warfare, the distinction of a splendid throne, the joys of a bridal feast in the highest rank of human beings, are some of the imagery by which the glory of heaven is held out to view.

The beloved of the Lord may indulge their conceptions, is assisted by sensible objects, or if possible get beyond a conception and stand under the beams and rays of glory, satisfied that whatever distance there may be between them and it, it is but the distance of a very little time, and as sure as we

100

* Rev. vii. 17, 18, 14.

are made meet to be partakers of it. God will receive us to it. The reception will be gracious as that which the king gives to the general of his forces, who by his wisdom, fidelity and exertion in a long and hazardous war has omitted no opportunity to preserve the safety of his country and support the honour of its sovereign.—It will be as the reception an affectionate son meets with from a tender father, from whom he has been long absent, or because it is a reception of a joyful nature, therefore it is described as entering *into the joy of our Lord*. How widely will it differ from the reception one friend expects from another here, on the meeting after a long absence! The anticipation of such an event generally produces more pleasure than the object anticipated, but the reception of a gracious soul into glory will very far exceed the anticipation of it, notwithstanding faith may give the strongest colour while painting the event. Such receptions as we have exemplified it by, after the sudden gush of joy they occasion, leave the mind; which as it becomes familiarized to the scenes and objects to which it is introduced, views them and lives among them without any remarkable sensibility; but the sacred Scriptures assure believers, *they shall obtain joy and gladness, and that everlasting joy shall be upon their heads*. Why are we not more in the contemplation of it! Why is not the thought of it the devourer of those anxious cares, distresses and sorrows, which too often make

us as miserable as though our hopes and expectations were bounded by the grave? It is because we are so limited to sense and give so little scope to faith. In proportion as heaven-realizing faith prevails, it will produce deadness to the world and conformity to God, such at least as our dear and valuable Friend in a good degree manifested, whose recent release from our world gave birth to this subject.

I would give a few traits of her character previous to the application of the matter we have been treating.

At a proper time in life she had an honourable dismission from her father's house to receive and impart the blessings of the marriage state. The companion of her life was taken from her at an early period when his countenance seemed to be of the utmost importance to his rising family. On the removal of the human stay the everlasting Arm was stretched out. In God the fatherless found mercy, and that widowhood commenced which in the estimation of the Apostle is deserving of honour. Mrs. Lanfear exemplified the widow in deed; *she trusted in God, and continued in prayer night and day.* The mark of the divine favour appeared in many instances; one was the duty and affection of her rising family, no one of which ever grieved her, but each concurred with the other to manifest affection by industry and fidelity, they partook with her in the blessings they were instrumental

instrumental in augmenting, and live to testify how superiour their pleasures are to those of the libertine who lives to make his parents miserable upon earth and to bring down their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.—Her house was the seat of plenty and hospitality, where friendship ever smiled, where the liberal widow devised liberal things, the distressed obtained relief answerable to the extent of ability, and many no doubt glorified God for her liberal distribution unto them. At a proper time the affectionate parent attended to the natural claims of the dutiful children, and with a placid compliance to the motion of Providence, resigning the spot to which she had reason to be partial, for a rising generation, retreated to the less affluent and contracted station, where blessed with the attention and attendance of a most dutiful and affectionate daughter, the pious widow has been waiting for the blessed change that is now come.

In the early part of life the Gospel came to her, not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance, by the ministry of some of the most disinterested men that ever lived*. It left on her such a relish for the truth

* Mr. Cenick and Mr. Adams connected with Mr. Whitefield, and who at that time preached frequently at the parish of Avebury, Wilts, near to which Mrs. Lanfear then lived. This account I received from her in one of our conversations.

[98]

truth as she never lost. She proposed herself a candidate for church membership where the term of admission was baptism upon profession of faith; means were used with success to impress her with the importance of the subject, she died in the persuasion of it, but liberal, charitable and peaceful towards those who have different views. On her removal she joined communion with a church who judge it scriptural to offer up their children to God in the sacred ordinance of baptism, and in membership with that society she closed connection with the church militant. The humbling view she had of herself made her always cautious of saying any thing that amounted to a *confident boasting*. We have reason to think that at times, but not latterly, death was formidable to her. But diligent attendance on all the means of grace when her situation was five miles distant from the place of worship and the road exceedingly bad, her repeated declaration that her sole confidence was in Jesus Christ, and her hopes of being justified by faith through his righteousness imposed, her exact walk, her meek and quiet spirit, and her tender disposition towards the afflicted of every description—all prove that she chose the good part. The tranquillity of her spirit which made her amiable in life was very conspicuous in the last weeks of it. The fear of death was an unnecessary fear, the manner in which she was removed connected with her gradual decay unattended with pain was an uncommon indulgence.

The

The hand she feared treated her very gently. Though her speech failed her, she was at liberty to utter the two monosyllables, *yes* and *no*, and the former not a fortnight since being uttered to the question, Are you happy; and the general account given of her death leaves me without a doubt that her end was peace. A long connection with the church in different parts of the world, has afforded me great opportunity to be acquainted with numbers of professors, among whom, I know no one whose life I would prefer to Mrs. Lanfear's as a model for imitation, and as to her death I would pray with submission, Let my last end be like her's; but we have not to chuse, all is wisely appointed for us, we have only to be followers of those gone before us as they followed Christ, to submit to Providence, and live upon the promise, *My grace is sufficient for thee, as your day is so shall your strength be.*

We would improve the subject by three reflections.

1st. What an impropriety is there in the conduct of man who would live without God and be at his own disposal! Properly speaking, it is impossible, for *in him we live and move and have our being.* But the reflection respects the indisposition of the mind to make a proper acknowledgement of God. This is the case with thousands who act as though they had no dependance upon him: they do not acknowledge him in any of their ways.

Are

Are there none of this description within these walls?—How many schemes have you laid without asking God to shew you the propriety, or impropriety of them, without considering whether your conduct be consistent with his will, or whether it be likely to bring any glory to his great name. As you run counter to his will when he by his providence counteracts yours, there is like to be sore destruction on your part, you will pay dear for striving for the mastery if the power of God should be exerted for resentment and revenge. He can plague you with disappointment, and can increase the plague until seven times upon you according to your sin. He has made the awful declaration, *If ye walk contrary to me then will I walk contrary to you in fury.* Should he suspend his threatening, and let you alone to walk in the way of your own heart, your perverseness will terminate at last in sorrow. Happy the man who commits his way unto the Lord, who expresses his dependence by prayer as to this effect, *Lead me into thy truth, and teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path.* A disposition to be guided by God will excite to the exercise of prayer. He who submissively gives himself unto prayer has many promises meeting the request of his lips.

ally. See the effect of the grace of God! It produces a consciousness of our inability either to

manage

manage our concerns in this life, or to attain happiness after death without the guidance of our gracious God. If we are not brought under this consciousness we shall rush on precipitately, animated perhaps by a series of uninterrupted prosperity till we take the irretrievable step that leads to perdition. The fool who saith in his heart There is no God, and the foolish who act as if there were none, are liable to be convinced of their ignorance by destruction being brought upon them through means of the prosperity they enjoy; *the turning aside of the simple shall slay them; and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them*; or that he may bring them to their right mind he will make fully applicable to their case that scripture addressed to the church in her delusions: *I spake unto thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear; this hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyest not my voice—the wind shall eat all thy pastures.* The expedient to awaken a regard to God becomes successful and the awakened man subscribes with his hand, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* No more are prospects formed for this life, the life to come is no longer neglected. The hand is stretched out unto God in evidence of submission to him. He no longer makes a rest of his passage, but is disposed to consider himself a pilgrim upon earth. Glory is his object, and that he may not miss his way to it he gives himself up to the guidance of God and is satisfied that *he knoweth*

the

the way that he takes, while to himself it appears intricate and confused.

3d. We may reflect upon the advantage resulting from a disposition to take God for our guide. It exempts us from many distresses our perverse disposition exposes us to, it gives us the privilege of divine patronage, it enables us to rank with the heirs of promise, and to expect with certainty eternal Glory when we are dislodged from time. A thorn-hedge of opposition such as the church of old was threatened with^a is a sad torment to the human mind; our perverse will, obstinately attempting to tear the hedge, produces pain in proportion to the vigor of the effort, and after all we are but where we were, for *who hath hardened himself against God and prospered.*

The swifter Pharaoh and his host wanted the wheels of their chariots to run, the more heavily no doubt they seemed to drag. The more rapid the mind is, the more sensible it is of impediments to the accomplishment of its wishes and expectation; thus it was with the mother of Sifera who looked out at the window and cried through the lattice in her earnest expectation for her son's triumphant return, *Why is his chariot so long in coming, why carry the wheels of his chariot?* Contrary to this, the will of the creature being given up to the will of God, his motion is attended

attended to with reverend submission. We may properly conceive of a patiently waiting for the motion of God as the Apostle did of a patient waiting for Christ and recollect the high commendation given of the Patriarch's conduct in reference to the promise made to him, that he patiently endured the delays of it and the providences contradictory to it. How pleasing is it to reflect that whatever state we are in we are placed there not to live under neglect, but to subserve the purpose of God who has an end to answer by all that he does though *he giveth not account of any of his matters*. What a satisfaction is there in the thought that we are upon such terms with God as that we can humbly proclaim his protection and remind him of his promise, *The Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest*.* He will not leave us comfortless, though he should require us to pass through fire and water. He will be present to preserve us from evil. In the conduct of God towards his ancient Israel, expressed Ps. lxxvi. 12. we may see as well the issue of his conduct to all his people as what all they who are dearest to him are exposed to. *Thou hast tried us as silver is tried, thou broughtest us into the net, thou hast laid affliction upon our loins, thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through the fire and through the water, but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*—Is this the nature

* Josh. i. 9.

ware of the divine procedure? Then let us individually commit the keeping of our souls unto him in well doing as unto a faithful Creator, saying, *Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*

The Lord is my strength and my shield, my high tower of defence. He shall deliver me from all mine enemies, he shall preserve my horn, he shall exalt me above mine enemies. He shall deliver me from all mine enemies, he shall preserve my horn, he shall exalt me above mine enemies. He shall deliver me from all mine enemies, he shall preserve my horn, he shall exalt me above mine enemies.

9 JY 86

The Lord is my strength and my shield, my high tower of defence. He shall deliver me from all mine enemies, he shall preserve my horn, he shall exalt me above mine enemies. He shall deliver me from all mine enemies, he shall preserve my horn, he shall exalt me above mine enemies. He shall deliver me from all mine enemies, he shall preserve my horn, he shall exalt me above mine enemies.



